

THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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A DRAWN GAME.

BY BASIL.

AUTHOR OF "LOVE THE DEBT," ETC.

CHAPTER XLIV. DICK OPENS HIS HEART.

THE reader will have remarked that Mrs. Tuck's version of the letter was inaccurate—of course unintentionally and unconsciously. She repeated its contents as anyone with her prepossessions must have repeated them. Taking it for granted that the references to the forgiveness sought and to the service done were to Archie's desertion and rescue of Anastasia, she spoke as if these were explicitly mentioned in the note—as indeed she thought they were—ninety-nine persons out of every hundred would have thought so, had they read the note, as Mrs. Tuck did, but once, and with but one idea in her head. Therefore, there was not the shadow of a shade of doubt in Ida's mind that the letter—which was certainly in Archie's hand—was a confession of his conduct to Anastasia having been so bad that only a service so great as the saving of her life at the risk of his own could atone for it. That he longed not only to atone for it, but that they should themselves be atoned (in the Shakespearian sense of the word), was plain from the lovers' meeting to which the letter invited Anastasia, and of which Ida herself was a witness.

Of all this Ida had no doubt, and really could have no doubt. If she had herself read the letter she must have doubted that Archie—whatever he was—could have written in such a strain to a girl whose mother's body, reduced almost to ashes, was yet above ground. But Mrs. Tuck, to spare Ida's feelings, had rendered the light tone of the note serious and earnest in her version.

It was then, we say, impossible for Ida,

or anyone in her place, to doubt Archie's monstrous duplicity. This was the man to whom she had shown her whole heart, and the whole history of her heart, whose every beat from childhood up to yesterday had been true to him! Conceive the crushing mortification of this thought to a girl like Ida, whose self-respect verged on the vice of pride. How much more mortifying was the consciousness that she could not, do what she would, root out altogether from her heart this degrading passion.

It was this consciousness, this disgust with herself, more even than her disgust with Archie, which made her, on the morning of their departure for London, be in such feverish haste to send back a letter of his unopened. She was eager to convince rather herself than him, that she had torn him altogether and for ever out of her heart. It was this, too, which made her as anxious now, as before she had been reluctant, to quit The Keep for London, Paris, Rome, Egypt—anywhere that promised distraction from herself. She would fly, as so many have tried to fly, from her own shadow.

However, the suggestion of foreign travel was Dick's. He thought he might marry Ida abroad, not only without delay—which didn't matter so much now—but without fuss, which mattered a great deal.

Fuss of all kinds Dick detested, but the fuss of a wedding, and of his wedding! It was as pleasant to his thoughts as the fuss of a Roman Triumph to the mind of the captive prince doomed to adorn it.

"Everyone should travel," said Dick philosophically, "and everyone who can, should do the whole world. It's our duty to do it while we're in it; once we leave it we shall not again have the chance, I should say."

Then Dick held forth at great length,

and with a kind of languid eloquence which he could command on any subject, upon the proper way to travel—places to see, and seasons to see them; winding up with a pretty sweeping general law that you should go through the world as through a biography, beginning with the infancy of its hero and his cradle in the East, and winding up with his manhood in the West.

Westward the course of Empire takes its way;
The first four acts already past,
A fifth shall close the drama with the day;
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

In truth, Dick was in great force and spirits, for his aunt had told him before they started that Ida had sent back Archie's letter unopened. Mrs. Tuck listened with admiration, as she always did, to Dick's ready eloquence; but as for his proposal of a harum-scarum scamper after the sun in this fashion, she had too vivid a recollection of knocking about the world in her old campaigning days to entertain it for a moment.

"You don't really expect us to chase the sun farther than London?" she said.

"Where it runs to earth. London's the last cover one would draw for the sun, my dear aunt; and that's why I suggested going to some place where you can see it without looking through a smoked glass at its eclipse. We needn't go out of Europe, if you dislike a long journey," with the air of making a large concession.

"Well, thank you, I don't think I shall," replied his aunt, laughing in a way which convinced Dick that she had not the least intention of going beyond London. Nor had she. Dick and Ida might, if they chose, go will-o'-the-wisp over the globe on their honeymoon, but she had had quite enough of that sort of thing in her time. At the thought of their honeymoon she glanced across at Ida, lying listlessly back in the seat opposite, and the deadness in the girl's face convinced her that her disenchantment with her cousin had brought the wished-for wedding no nearer. If Archie had been torn out of her heart, her heart itself seemed to have been torn up with him—as you wrench up the soil along with a plant which has pierced it with a hundred roots. She looked as though she had, and would have for a long, long time to come, no heart for anyone or anything. Indeed, Mrs. Tuck, from her knowledge of the girl, doubted with good reason if she would ever get quite over so cruel and so crushing a blow

to her pride, her trust, and her love. If she had been like other girls, and could "give sorrow words," it would have been different, but she would brood in silence and alone over a grief which could not speak, and which, like "a creature made fierce by dark keeping," was all the more terrible from never being allowed to see the light.

On their arrival in London, Dick, with an eye still to taking them abroad, carried them off to the Charing Cross Hotel. The more he thought of it, the better he liked the idea of escaping the long-drawn-out horrors of an English wedding. He could "consent to death and conquer agony," but the inhuman shout which would hail the maid who won him was too much. Dick had never seen a wedding in which the bridegroom did not look like the dying gladiator—beaten, and in anguish, but trying to mask his misery with a thin smile, while the bride as invariably looked like "the wretch who won," and the wedding-guests like the inhuman spectators in the circus, making a Roman holiday of a fellow-creature's agony. This part of the penalty, at least, he would escape, if he could contrive that the wedding should take place privately abroad. Besides, if he crossed the water, he would throw off the scent the yelping pack of duns who pursued him.

Thinking these things, Dick attacked his aunt when Ida had retired to her own room.

"You didn't seem to like the idea of going abroad?"

"I didn't like it at all, Dick."

"I can't see——"

"My dear Dick, I'm not going abroad. You can take Ida where you like on your honeymoon."

"But it's the wedding I want to take place abroad somewhere. I think Ida would like the privacy of it."

"But you don't really think, Dick, that Ida would consent to be married in such indecent haste?"

"Indecent!"

"How long has my poor dear husband been gone—to say nothing of this other trouble? You cannot expect her to think of such a thing for months to come. You must wait."

"Oh, I can wait well enough," almost with a sneer; "but you see my creditors won't."

"You'd better tell Ida so," retorted his aunt, indignant at his tone.

Nevertheless, Dick thought the advice good. Accordingly next day he took Ida for a walk in St. James's Park, and spoke very effusively and affectionately of her great generosity towards him; but this generosity forced him to be at least just towards her, and mere justice required that he should explain how broken were the fortunes to which she had consented to link hers. Then Dick confessed that in a weak moment of good-nature he had put his name on the back of a bill for a large sum to oblige a friend, that this friend had written to say there was no hope of his being able to meet it two months hence, when it fell due; and, therefore, Dick at that date would probably be arrested for the debt.

"I have not told my aunt, but I could not keep it from you, Ida."

"But, if it's only money—if you would accept—Mrs. Tuck could arrange it," stumbled Ida, fearful of the offence of a direct offer of money.

"Pray, pray, do not mention it to my aunt. I could hardly bring myself to mention it even to you, Ida. And as for the kind offer which you shrink from making, how much more should I shrink from accepting it! No, no; I have not yet sunk to that. I only told you because I can keep nothing now from you; and because, too, to say the truth, it's so great a relief to have some one to tell my trouble to who shares it by her sympathy."

"But why will you not let me free you from it? If you knew how great the relief would be to me you would do me this kindness."

And, indeed, the relief to Ida of being allowed to compound in this easy way for some part of her overwhelming debt to Dick would have been immense. But Dick's nice sense of honour revolted from such a suggestion.

"Do you think I do not know how generous you are, Ida? But your very generosity should make me strive to be less unworthy of you. Should I be worthy of you if I allowed you in our present relation to each other to do this thing for me? The time will come, dearest, when we shall share together all burdens; but till then I must ask you only for your sympathy. I had no one else to speak to about it, for I could not bring myself to make my aunt miserable with my troubles. You will say nothing of it to her, Ida?"

"But don't you think if you told her—"

"No, no, dearest; not a word to her. A trouble such as this, which she could do nothing to relieve, would make her more unhappy than you could imagine. I must bear it myself, as I brought it upon myself," in a tone of suicidal dejection.

Ida began to think, as Dick intended she should, how terrible must this trouble be which depressed to despair the usually buoyant Dick. How noble to encounter it for a friend's sake, and to conceal it for his aunt's sake! But it was of a piece with all the rest of Dick's magnanimous conduct.

"You're not offended with me, dearest?" murmured Dick, after a pause left for Ida to take in the greatness of this impending trouble. "You're not offended with me, dearest? When we are what we shall be to each other—soon," pausing significantly before and after the word, "there's no burden which I shall not ask you to share with me, and to let me share with you. But, till I have the dear right to call you mine, I must bear my trouble, as I can, alone," very pathetically.

Dick, having thus skilfully, we think, sought to establish in Ida's mind a connection between this dread trouble and their marriage, which alone could deliver him out of it, quitted the subject for the present with the full intention of returning to it again and again, till Ida's generosity reconciled her to the sole mode of escape which he suggested out of the strait.

For the present, however, Dick turned aside to talk about money, and the disproportionate part so mere an accident was allowed to play in our estimates of men and things. Let a man or a woman, he said, become on a sudden rich or poor, we not merely affect to think, we really do think as differently of their moral qualities as though their characters rose or fell with the suddenness and after the measure of their fortunes. Even Dick himself, though his carelessness about money (which with him was rather a vice than a virtue) saved him from weighing a man by his purse, yet even he was influenced against his reason by Ida's sudden changes of fortune—an heiress one day, penniless the next, and the third an heiress again. While she was penniless she seemed so much nearer to him that he felt she might even love him, and he might at last express all his long-pent passion: Now again she was an heiress, and she seemed suddenly, he knew not how, farther off from him. There

were times when he wished her penniless once more. It was selfish of him, he knew, but it was human nature, and he could not help it. Yet, if his poor love remained unaffected by every change in her fortune, how could he imagine that any change of fortune could affect such a heart as hers? This was his reassurance.

Thus Dick, eloquently—Ida mute and troubled, but lost in admiration at such magnanimity.

JOHN WYCLIFFE.

THE present year is the quincentenary of Wycliffe—that is to say, it is five hundred years since he died in his parish of Lutterworth. John of Wycliffe—there are twenty-eight ways of spelling his name, and we elect the above mode—is one of the greatest, and until recent times one of the obscurest names in English history. It has always been clear, however, that he has been one of the greatest contributors to the English language, English freedom, the English Bibles, and the religious Reformation of Europe. Wycliffe is no insular name. He connects himself, through his influence over John Huss and Jerome of Prague, with the great religious and political movement abroad which culminated in Luther's work, and in England he is the morning star of the Reformation, the founder of Lollardism, and precursor of Protestantism.

In the King's Library in the British Museum there is, appropriately enough, this year a Wycliffe Exhibition, displaying many of the choicest treasures of the MSS. department. It contains copies of ancient versions of portions of the Scriptures, especially the Psalms and the Gospels which had been translated into English before Wycliffe's time. Sir Thomas More stated that before Wycliffe's date, he had seen entire translations of the Bible, but nothing of the kind has been discovered, and there is no evidence in support of the notion. At the British Museum there are a few superb examples of the Reformer's earlier version, and many more of the later versions. There is one copy which belonged to the Duke of Gloucester, son of Edward the Second, who was put to death in 1397, and another which was found in the library of Henry the Seventh. In addition to the translation of the Bible, which was mainly his work, Wycliffe wrote about a hundred

Latin tracts, and about sixty-five in English, varying in size from mere fly-sheets to treatises of considerable extent. These are fairly represented in the British Museum. It is remarkable that only one MS. of Wycliffe's is known to exist in this country, while there are many at Prague, and a great series of his Latin manuscripts lies untranslated in the Imperial Library of Vienna. Much has been done in England to elucidate Wycliffe's times and writings, especially in his own University of Oxford, where a magnificent facsimile version of his Bible has been published, and where several learned professors have produced valuable work respecting him, but the most adequate and complete account of him is to be found in the writings of Professor Lechler, of Leipsic.

In a whole field of conjecture and hypothesis there are some salient facts which serve to build up some kind of biography. His full name, John de Wycliff, means that he was one John, born in the hamlet of Wye-cliff, or Water-cliff. The cliff overhangs the waters of the Tees near the junction with the Greta. It is only about ten miles from the romantic scenery of Richmond, and its own scenery is hardly less romantic. It is not far from the castles of Barnard and Raby. An original portrait of the Reformer is an heirloom in the rectory of Wye-cliff, and in the church, where many of the family lie buried, a monumental brass recalls the memory of the last member of the family of Wycliffe. No narrative survives to tell us of any visit in after days to the place of his nativity by this John "of that ilk." According to the fashion of that time he proceeded at a very early age to the University of Oxford, then the greatest University of Europe. It is said that Oxford had then thirty thousand students, a statement which sounds like an exaggeration, but an exaggeration that indicates a very large number. Then Oxford would not be so much like the Oxford or Cambridge of to-day as the Scottish Universities, which largely number boys as well as men among the students. If the men came up early, they stopped long. At the present time all University studies are practically complete when a man has passed for his degree of Bachelor of Arts. All such degrees as Master of Arts, or Doctor of Divinity, imply no examination at all. They are simply a matter of paying of fees and of putting on

of hands. In those days the students passed many years in proceeding through various stages of education, and frequently, as wandering pilgrims of knowledge, they passed on from University to University.

Various colleges of Oxford claim Wycliffe as their own. Indeed, this conflict of claims began not many years after Wycliffe's death, and within the last few years the conflict has been revived. Queen's College, Balliol, Merton, Canterbury, now absorbed in Christ Church, are the disputants, and these many claimants suggest the idea that there are probably more Wycliffes than one, and, indeed, modern research has brought to light the existence of another Wycliffe, a worthy, well-intentioned man, no doubt, but who has no claims to history either of making it or being mentioned in it. He has served, however, to confuse the question of colleges.

There seems to be no doubt that our Wycliffe was Master of Balliol, and not much doubt that he became warden of Canterbury Hall. Probably, after his periods of headship had expired, he had hired rooms at Queen's College. He made himself a great power at Oxford, where he became a most profound and renowned professor. One great schoolman had been known as "The Irrefragable;" another as "The Subtle;" another "The Angelical." Wycliffe became known as "The Evangelical." Old Foxe says "that he was famously reputed for a famous divine, a deep schoolman, and no less expert in all kinds of philosophy." Knighton, the historian, and his enemy, says that "his powers of debate were almost more than human." He taught in logic and philosophy, and also lectured in the canon and civil law. He also seems to have taken an active part in the administrative affairs of the University, wherein Wycliffe differed so greatly from his contemporaries that, whereas the so-called theologians of the time occupied themselves with studying Aquinas, and Scotus, and Peter Lombard, the "Master of the Sentences," he gave vigorous lectures on the Bible, which was quite a new thing in Oxford experiences, and not only explained it to his pupils in the week, but preached it to the public on Sundays. He accused the clergy of having banished the Scriptures, and demanded the reinstatement of their authority in the Church. It so happened that at this time the awful pestilence of the Black Death swept over Europe, devastated England, and destroyed one half

of the population. The lands were left untilled, the cattle strayed at their own will through corn-field and pasture; the hearts of all men failed them for terror. This awful visitation intensely affected the mind of Wycliffe, and, perhaps, disposed the minds of many to listen with respect to his earnest and impressive teaching.

The history of the Oxford scholar and divine now connects itself with the general history of the country. At this time England was in the most priest-ridden period of its annals. Wycliffe was called upon to intervene between the crushing tyranny of the papacy and the dawning conscience and liberties of England. Mr. Green, the historian, eloquently says: "As yet, indeed, even Wycliffe himself can hardly have suspected the immense range of his intellectual powers. It was only the struggle that lay before which revealed, in the dry and subtle schoolman"

—Mr. Green here inadequately describes the character and work of Wycliffe at this earlier date—"the founder of our later English prose, and master of popular invective, of irony, of persuasion, a dexterous politician, an audacious partisan; the organiser of a religious order, the unsparing assailant of abuses, the boldest and most indefatigable of controversialists; the first Reformer who dared, when deserted and alone, to question and deny the creed of the Christendom around him; to break through the traditions of the past, and with his last breath to assert the freedom of religious thought against the dogmas of the papacy." At this time England seemed handed over to Rome, bound hand and foot. The greed and rapacity of the Pontiff, who then lived at Avignon, and was practically a Frenchman, supporting French interests against England, passed all bounds. The English people scorned a French Pope who was identified with their bitterest enemies. More than one third of the soil, at this time, belonged to the Church. The taxes in England levied by the Pope amounted to five times the taxes levied by the King. The first fruits of all livings were claimed by the Pope, and foreign priests were obtruded into English sees and benefices. The Protest of the Good Parliament declares: "The brokers of the sinful city of Rome promote for money unlearned and unworthy caitiffs to benefices of the value of a thousand marks, while the poor and learned hardly obtain one of twenty. So

decays sound learning. The Pope's revenue from England alone is larger than that of any prince in Christendom." At home the mendicant friars had become a kind of "sturdy beggars," and forgetting any high mission which they might once have had, became notorious for greed and self-indulgence. It is remarkable that in the first efforts of the infant literature of England, in Chaucer, and the author of *Piers Plowman*, we have vivid delineations of the abuses in the Church. The English Parliament had prohibited the admission of papal bulls by the Statute of *Præmunire*, and denied the papal claim to dispose of benefices by the Statute of *Provision*. These famous statutes, which became powerful enough at a later date, were at first a comparative failure. In 1366 Urban the Fifth made a monstrous demand that the arrears of tribute promised by King John should be paid him, and summoned Edward to appear before him at Avignon to answer for the long default. The Lords and Commons answered that "neither King John nor any other king could bring his realm and kingdom in any such thralldom and subjection but by common consent of Parliament, the which was not done." Wycliffe in a public disputation at Oxford defended the decision of the Parliament. He appears at this time to have been one of the King's chaplains, and he has given us an account of the speeches of the secular canons on the subject, which is the nearest approach extant to the report of the parliamentary debate.

In 1373 efforts were made by the King to come to terms with the Pope in order to alleviate the heavy burdens on the nation. It was arranged that an embassy from England should meet envoys of the Pope at Bruges, and Dr. John Wycliffe, with five others, were appointed to assist the Bishop of Bangor, who was at the head of the English commission. A visit to Bruges would be a new and wonderful experience to Wycliffe, for Bruges was then the emporium and mart of trades; it was the "city of bridges," and much of the merchandise of the world reposed on its waters; Princes, and merchants rich as Princes, resided in the stately palaces. It so happened that John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, the third Edward's son, was there at the time, negotiating terms of peace with the ambassadors of the King of France. Between him and Wycliffe some sort of intimacy sprang up, destined to have important

consequences. John of Gaunt was in favour of measures of ecclesiastical reform which would alleviate the gross abuses of the time. Wycliffe's ideas embraced not only an ecclesiastical reform, but a thorough religious form; but with these Duke John had little sympathy. Still, the two men had much in common, and John of Gaunt became Wycliffe's avowed friend and supporter. It so happened that neither of them had any success in their respective missions. As a reward for his services, the King gave Wycliffe the prebend of Aust, in the collegiate church of Westbury-on-Trym, close to Bristol, then in the diocese of Worcester. In a garden at Westbury, just below the church, there is a solitary tower covered with ivy, which is all that remains of the ancient castellated monastery. There is a curious entry preserved in the Record Office, that certain men were to appear in court at the "Feast of the Ascension of Our Lord, on the claim of Master John de Wycliffe, clerk, to answer the said John for forcibly taking away his goods and chattels at Aust, value forty pounds." The tradition is nourished that he lodged in an ancient conventual-looking house at the entrance of the village, where it dips from Durdham Down, Clifton.

Wycliffe by this time had made himself obnoxious to the last degree to the ruling ecclesiastical authorities. He had denounced the papacy. He had attacked the mendicant friars. In many respects his public teaching had contradicted the dogmatic system of the Church of Rome. He found himself summoned to appear before Courtney, Archbishop of Canterbury, at St. Paul's. He came, but he did not come alone. He was supported by John of Gaunt and Lord Henry Percy, Lord Marshal of England. When they came to "Our Lady's Chapel in St. Paul," a fierce debate arose whether Wycliffe should have to sit or stand before the Primate. High words were exchanged between the Bishop and the Lord Marshal; something like a general riot ensued, and the whole proceeding proved abortive. Three months later he was summoned to appear before the Pope at Rome, for by this time the Pontiff had got back to Rome from Avignon. The Pope sent no fewer than five bulls, ordering his arrest and imprisonment. The difficulty, however, lay in getting the bulls executed. Wycliffe declared that no man could be excommunicated by the Pope "unless he were first excommunicated by

himself." Wycliffe was again summoned, this time at Lambeth. Articles were exhibited, and he appealed to Scripture—his invariable court of appeal—in defence. But while proceedings were still going on, messengers from Court appeared, forbidding the prelates to proceed any farther. Wycliffe returned to Oxford, to write and to preach once more according to his former wont. At this time, too, the great papal schism occurred. While Urban continued at Rome a majority of cardinals again seceded to Avignon and set up another Pope. This added to the security, which, often threatened, Wycliffe nevertheless enjoyed till the end of his time. He did not fail to attack and dwell on the great schism in which each Pope excommunicated his rival, and pronounced him Antichrist, and, having attacked the papacy, he proceeded to attack the whole Church system, in its then condition, as rotten to the core. He loudly declared against the alienation of English property to the papacy, and argued that though the Church administered its estates they were really the property of the nation, which could reclaim them in case of necessity.

In the midst of his work he was struck down by paralysis. The mendicant friars sent to him four holy doctors, and with them four aldermen, to visit him in his illness, in the hope that they might obtain a recantation of his errors. First of all they saluted him, wished him good health and a recovery from his distemper. Then they pointed out all the injury he had done them by his sermons and writings, and exhorted him, as a true penitent, to bewail and repent of whatsoever things he had said to their disparagement. Wycliffe rallied his energies, called his man to him, and bade him raise him on his pillow. Then he said with a loud voice: "I shall not die, but live, and declare the evil deeds of the friars." His visitors departed in confusion, and he himself made a good recovery.

When the rebellion of Wat Tyler occurred, an attempt was made by his enemies to connect him with the insurrectionists. It is not likely that there is any truth in this idea, if only for the reason that the friars, against whom he exhibited such hostility, were generally considered to be in full sympathy with the popular movement. His enemies succeeded at last in driving him from Oxford. John of Gaunt came down to visit him there, to adjure him to leave out the religious and stick

to the political side of questions. But Wycliffe was not to be moved. Certain propositions were picked out of his writings and condemned by the University. It is said that he was teaching in his lecture-room when the apparitor of the University authorities drove him forth. For fifty years he had done manful work at Oxford, and the place is still eloquent with his memory. And now he retired altogether to Lutterworth, a benefice to which he had been presented by the late King, if, indeed, he could find there a haven of repose.

We will now glance for a few minutes at Lutterworth, where the Reformer passed the last years of his blameless and laborious life. A prebendal stall, and one or two small livings in succession, were all the promotion obtained by the most renowned clergyman of his age. These seem to have been relinquished, and he finally settled entirely in the Leicestershire village. Many are the pilgrimages that have been made there in the present day. Lutterworth is pleasantly situated on the side of a hill, three and a half miles from Ullathorpe station on the Midland Railway, seven miles from Rugby, and thirteen from Leicester. It is a flourishing, old-fashioned, and little known place, and of course very proud of the memory of Wycliffe. It has a few historical curiosities. It has town-hall, market-place, and grammar-school. There has been a great find of Roman coins here. The inhabitants were once obliged to grind all their corn at a particular mill, and bake all their bread at a particular oven, but the case went to the assizes and was decided in the interests of freedom. The place boasted a whipping-post, a cuck-stool, and a parish cage. Scolding women were ducked in the river, in a deep hole below the bridge. There is a romantic story of a murder committed by a miller, and discovered many years afterwards by an accident, when the miller, after twenty years' absence, had returned to Lutterworth. Such are the items of Lutterworth's history, all overshadowed by memorials of the great Reformer.

The church is the very structure in which Wycliffe ministered during nine years, in the last five of which he was constantly resident. It was restored in recent years by Sir Gilbert Scott, who thought that the chancel might have been the work of Wycliffe's time. The tower, and pillars and arches of the nave, are unquestionably much earlier than his date.

There is good reason to believe, from the nature of the carvings, that the pulpit is Wycliffe's own pulpit. An old oak chair, probably of the same date, is called Wycliffe's chair, and is placed on the north side of the altar. There is a mural monument by Westmacott on the chancel-wall in memory of Wycliffe. There is a new font; the old one which Wycliffe used is preserved in the Leicester Museum. One of his vestments is partially preserved; it was gradually diminishing through pious thefts, and is now enclosed in a glass case. A very handsome oak table is preserved, from which the great Reformer used to feed the poor. Two volumes of Wycliffe's Bible are also kept in a glass case, and there is also a fine old black-letter copy of Foxe's Book of Martyrs, with part of the chain attached to it, which was formerly kept chained in church for the perusal of the people, and in this work honest Foxe chronicles the achievements of Wycliffe. When the church was restored, they discovered a priest's doorway, through which Wycliffe must often have passed; a square "aumbry" for sacramental vessels, which he must often have used; and an early English piscina, with a trefoil-headed fenestelle, containing the usual stone basin, in which Wycliffe's hands must often have been. Outside the doorway there is a carving of the Reformer's head.

The last years of Wycliffe's life in the little village are as crowded with work as any others—incessant and fruitful works. He was a diligent preacher, and an assiduous visitor of the aged, the sick, and the poor. Chaucer's description of the "good persone" is by some supposed to have been meant for Wycliffe, and would certainly suit him very well.

There were two matters especially, which were of the greatest care and moment to him. One of these was the translation of the Bible. As we have seen, there were in existence some translations of detached portions of the Scriptures. There seems to have been no idea whatever of popularising these among the people. They were to be found only in the libraries of the learned and the cabinets of the rich. Wycliffe had the magnificent idea of translating the whole of the Scriptures, and of bringing the whole of the Scriptures within the range of every Englishman. He accordingly persevered with his work of translating the Bible. In those days no one seemed to have the ability or inclination to study the original text, Hebrew and Greek, and

Wycliffe's translation was made from the Vulgate, the famous Latin version of St. Jerome. The whole of the New Testament appears to have been rendered by Wycliffe himself. In other quarters he appears to have received considerable assistance, but the work of his friends was inferior to his own. A translation from a translation must necessarily be imperfect, and before his death Wycliffe was busy with a revision which did not appear till two years after that event. A number of copyists were set to work. At the present time we believe that there are more than one hundred copies of Wycliffe's Bible in existence. His full desire could not be accomplished until it was brought about by the invention of printing. Just as the barons who obtained Magna Charta could not have divined how much of the glory, and liberty, and expansion of England was wrapped up in that great document; so neither could Wycliffe have realised how much he was doing for his country, and for the world, when he formed the great design, so far as he was able, of bringing the Bible within the range of all Englishmen.

Wycliffe showed his great organising genius in the institution of Poor Preachers.

The mendicant friars had been something of the same sort at first, until their work had degenerated into telling idle stories and filling their wallets. Wycliffe anticipated the organisation which John Wesley set afloat in the last century. His poor preachers were at first his own pupils and graduates of Oxford. John Purvey was one of them, who greatly helped him in his translation of the Bible, who brought out the revised edition, and who often preached in Bristol, and other places where the Reformer was known. These men went forth barefooted, staff in hand, "preaching simple Christ to simple men," in Tennyson's phrase. The effect of Wycliffe's Bible and preachers was very great. "If you met two men on the high road," said one of Wycliffe's enemies, "one of them was sure to be a Wycliffite."

In 1382 Wycliffe presented his appeal to King and to Parliament. In the same year he was summoned before Courtney, the new Archbishop of Canterbury, a man who had always been his enemy, to appear before various Bishops and divines at the Dominican monastery in Whitefriars. This is the very spot on which the Times office is now situated. Wycliffe made the fullest exposition of his opinions. He

went not alone into practical abuses, but into doctrinal errors as he considered them. In vain John of Gaunt warned him that, in the latter respect, he was on ground where he could not support him. Wycliffe persevered; there could be no doubt about the courage and earnestness of the man. This Conference is known as the Earthquake Council. While the proceedings were going on, an earthquake, mentioned by contemporary poets and other writers, shook the city, and filled the minds of men with terror. Each party claimed the earthquake as an omen in their favour. Wycliffe said the omen foreboded ill for his opponents, and Archbishop Courtney declared that the earthquake was an emblem of purification from false doctrine.

Wycliffe's enemies so far prevailed that he was completely silenced in Oxford, and for the short remainder of his days he does not seem to have left Lutterworth. His literary activity continued as great as ever, and his followers, loosely known under the general title of Lollards, multiplied in England. His incessant work at last told fatally on his overwrought energies. On the 28th of December, 1384, he was stricken down with a second attack of paralysis, while conducting service in his church at Lutterworth. He remained speechless till his death, which took place on the last day of the old year, and was laid in his own churchyard amid his beloved people.

Wycliffe truly told his followers that times of peril were at hand. The infamous Statute for the burning of heretics was in the future, and to be carried out in the persecution of the Lollards. The logic of martyrdom, of all logic the most illogical, for the most opposite parties have their martyrs, is nevertheless of all logic the most convincing, even winning adherents to the persecuted side. There is one special direction in which the influence of Wycliffe is to be traced with a personal result: the Queen Consort of Richard the Second, Anne of Bohemia, heard of his works and his translation of the four Gospels. Through her and persons connected with her court, the doctrine of the Reformers spread through Bohemia. John Huss and Jerome of Prague, who had actually studied at Oxford, eagerly received them; in fact, the reformation in Eastern Europe was an exact transcript of that which Wycliffe sought to develop in Bohemia. His whole system was, so to speak, imported bodily to the Continent. The safe-conduct of

the Emperor was shamelessly violated; Huss, condemned by the Council of Constance, was burnt alive. The tourist at Constance is still shown the place where he was confined, the ancient building where his sentence was pronounced, and the spot where he was executed. His latest utterances were those of gratitude and adhesion to Wycliffe. The Council of Constance proceeded to wreak vengeance on the dead body of Wycliffe. Having condemned his doctrine, they commanded "his body and bones, if they could be distinguished from those of the faithful, should be disinterred and cast away from the consecrated ground." Thirteen years later a Bishop of Lincoln was found who would execute the Pope's peremptory mandate. Then his bones, calcined by fire, were cast into the little river Swift, which flows rapidly at the base of the hill of Lutterworth. "This brook," says old Fuller in a memorable passage, "will convey his ashes into Avon, Avon into Severn, Severn into the narrow sea, and this into the wide ocean. And so the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over." "To Wycliffe," says Professor Burrows, "we owe more than to any one person who can be named, our English language, our English Bible, and our Reformed religion."

A CHINESE COLONEL ON CHINA.

COLONEL TCHENG-KI-TONG — formerly attaché to the Chinese Embassy at Paris — is grieved and scandalised at the wholly wrong view which Western nations take of the life and habits of the Celestials of the Far East. "You Europeans are," he says, "a continent of book-makers, and this accounts for your unfair way of writing. When a man has to fill some three hundred pages, and to sell them, no wonder he goes in for sensation. You err, moreover, through hasty induction. You hear of a case of child-murder, therefore you set down infanticide as an everyday occurrence; you find a lady who cannot walk, therefore you assume that all Chinese ladies are incapable of moving." This habit of attributing to his countrypeople all sorts of ugly peculiarities leads Colonel Tcheng to propose that we found an Academy which shall correct the wrong notions that our travellers have written down about the laws, manners, etc., of foreigners, before it allows their books to be published.

Wicked France readily enables him to point his moral. There, as moralists of all classes are constantly crying out, the Family is becoming of less and less account, whereas in China it is the all in all, the pivot on which everything turns, the centre round which all the national life revolves. The five cardinal virtues (everything in China goes by fives) flow from this source. Indeed, we may mix up any amount of metaphors without exhausting all that the Family is to the people of the Flowery Land. Chang, the model patriarch, is said to have had nine generations living under his roof, and even in these degenerate times one constantly finds three generations, and not rarely four, dwelling together, under the headship of the eldest male—a sight to convince Sir H. Sumner Maine and other expounders of the "joint family" system that this system is by no means confined to Aryans. These Chinese families have all things in common. As Colonel Tcheng puts it, the equality and fraternity which the French talk about they practise. If one falls ill the others help; if one is out of work the rest keep him going till he finds employment. Sometimes they quarrel, for even Chinamen, our Colonel admits, are human; and if there is no chance of making it up, the local mandarin can order the property to be equally divided among all the men. But if he is wise, and they are at all reasonable, a *modus vivendi* is generally found which will still hold them together. "In fact," he says, "we do in life what you in the West do only after death. Nothing struck me more in your cemeteries than your family graves, and, on enquiry, I found that, as a rule, the people buried in them had not seen anything during life of those among whom it is the right thing to bury them. We, too, have family graves, but their occupants were all their life long drawn together by the closest ties. They do not go down as strangers to what by a fiction is called a family vault." Every portion of the family property has its own appointed burden. On one field is laid the maintenance of the old men; on another the buying of prizes for the lads who pass good examinations; on a third field are charged the dowries of the marriageable girls; and so on. The five virtues aforesaid—loyalty to the Emperor, respect for parents, union between man and wife, love and helpfulness between brethren, constancy in friendships—all grow out of the Family.

And they not only grow, but thrive. For forty centuries they have been growing, and are so firmly rooted that, to take one instance, if a young fellow gets high honours, the title which goes along with them is awarded, not to him, but to his parents. If a man does you a good turn, your letter of thanks is addressed, not to him, but to the papa who was so happy as to bless his country with such a kind-hearted son. "And as for friendship, you Western people talk of it; we act it out. Live amongst us, and you will see a rich man stop his carriage or litter and walk to meet a poor creature, in coarse straw hat and rough clothes, in whom he has recognised a friend of his boyhood. You have the line laid down for you in your Sermon on the Mount; but I found a good many people in Paris with more than two coats, though there were also a good many with no coat at all. Nay, I found that one Martin, who on a cold night gave half his cloak to a beggar, was made a Saint for so doing. Why, in China a man would do that as a matter of course, and the idea of being made a Saint for it would never come into his head. To you, the exercise of the simplest virtues seems so marvellous that you at once fall to worshipping him or her who succeeds in it."

Reading all this, and a good deal more, in the Colonel's spirited paper in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, I began to ask myself: "How can there be any beggars in China if everybody is so open to the claims of friendship and kindred?" So I took up a book of unquestionable authority, Archdeacon Moule's *Four Hundred Millions*, with the view of testing the Colonel through one who has had plenty of experience, and who cannot be suspected of misrepresenting the people among whom he is still labouring. Now Mr. Moule has a whole chapter on Chinese beggars. They are an institution. They levy black-mail. Their head man (*kai-tow*) in every city estimates as accurately as an income-tax surveyor the wealth of the different shopkeepers; and, having done this, he goes his rounds, haggles with the tradesmen till they come to terms, and then sticks up in each shop and outside it a green paper and a red one, with his own name, the amount agreed on, the days fixed for payment, and a warning: "The brethren must not come here to disturb or annoy." If any shopkeeper is so ill-advised as to refuse to come to terms, the crowd of ragged, filthy, brazen-faced, loud-voiced beggars is

let loose on him; the native police decline to make them "move on," and the poor man soon has to give in, probably paying a good deal more than he would have done at first. A big shop will pay eight thousand cash (thirty shillings) a year; the chief grocer in Ningpo is said to be rated at as much as thirty-six thousand cash. They do not attack private houses, unless a birth, death, or marriage is going on. Funerals are their special opportunity, for the corpse must be laid in the earth during the lucky hours, and sometimes a crowd of beggars will prevent this unless they are bought off. Archdeacon Moule tells of a Christian burial at which they asked twenty thousand cash, and one of them leapt down into the grave so that the coffin could not be lowered. But Christians, of course, are independent of lucky or unlucky hours; so the clergyman determined to resist the extortion, and after waiting till late in the day the beggars were glad to compromise for eight hundred cash. Beggars, too, are used as collectors of small debts. When a man will not pay, and it is not worth while "lawing" him, the creditor gives the bill to the beggars, they agreeing to give him a share of what they get; and, thenceforth, the debtor's life is a burden to him till he has paid in full. But perhaps the Colonel includes the begging brotherhood among his joint-families. They certainly have all things in common, bringing in all their gains to the headman, and from him receiving food when it is too wet or cold to go out professionally. And they have been going on for ages; King Cophetua's beggar-maid finds her parallel in Miss Yuh Noo, daughter of the beggar-chief Twan Tow (round-head); and that was so long ago that some of the literati say she lived under the Northern Song dynasty (A.D. 420—478), while others put her among the Southern Songs (A.D. 960—1320).

And yet, though there is a great deal of charity in China, and some kind of public provision, the beggar class, Archdeacon Moule says, is wretched to a degree. The houses of the working poor in China are almost the ideal of human discomfort; but they are nothing to the beggar's rest-shed, open to the four winds, with mosquitoes tormenting him in summer, and in winter an old sack for blanket, and the snow for coverlet. No doubt there are Chinese who would rather beg than work; just as there are Europeans who have the same dislike for manual labour. But

work must be very scarce, and hunger very pressing, before a man will get a beggar-doctor to tie a string round his leg, tightening it day by day, until the lower part mortifies and the fellow is left to walk, like Widdrington, on his stumps. Many sink under the torture of the tedious operation; and its being in use hardly tallies with Colonel Tcheng's rose-coloured picture of Chinese benevolence. Nor does the fact that on a bitterly cold day you may see a naked beggar sitting shivering, an old coat with a wisp of straw fastened to it hung on a stick before him, to intimate that he has to sell his only garment to buy food.

But Colonel Tcheng is not content with asserting the superior brotherly kindness of his people, he insists that in all that concerns married life they are better than the Europeans. "Just as you never recognise the family tie till somebody is dead from whom you expect a legacy, so you make marriage a matter of bargain. With us it is a matter of religion. A man marries, or rather his parents choose a wife for him, in order that there may be some one to keep up the family sacrifices. Everybody gets married who has not a special reason for keeping single. With you it is just the reverse, because with you the Family is a nonentity. No one, therefore, marries unless he has a special reason for so doing. And what a hurried affair your marriage is, despite your civil and religious ceremonies! I think the most reasonable plan would be for you to be married in the train that is to carry you away. Get the priest and the mayor to go to the station, and the friends to assemble on the platform, and then, the moment it is over, off you go, with the scream of the engine for your wedding music." And then he contrasts the Chinese ceremonies—all the presents on both sides; the betrothal dinners; the bride's red satin sedan placed on view in the dining-room; the music and fireworks; the bridesman with a silver mirror on his breast, bowing thrice, and then lifting the lady from her chair; the elders on both sides doing the work of mayor and priest, for it is a purely family affair; the "open house," in which the bride sits in state, behind a table, with a lighted candelabrum on each side of her. After going through all this, he exclaims: "Ceremonial has died out among you. You have a remnant of it in your funerals, but in everything else you have laughed the life out of it." And Chinese husband and

wife get on, he says, so well together. Her husband's honours are reckoned to the wife. "She has the bringing up of the children, and we shall never be civilised enough to desire for them a more perfect education." "Oh, but in China, woman is a plaything—a doll." Nonsense! If she has a good husband—and our Colonel hints that bad husbands are the rare exceptions out there—"she is of all wives the best and happiest. And as for the little feet that you lavish so much foolish pity on——" Well, the Colonel does rather shirk that subject, contenting himself with saying that it is a mistake to suppose that Chinese ladies cannot walk; they can even run; and (which he seems to think more than a compensation) when they go out, walking or in their chairs, they never put on a veil.

That is rather a lame way out of the little foot difficulty; nevertheless, the Colonel's paper is well worth thinking over. We certainly are often too vain-glorious about the far from perfect style in which we fulfil what we recognise as Christian duties; a man who does even a little in that way gets looked on as a nineteenth century saint. And, above all, what the Colonel says about the Family is true for the West as well as for the East. Common purse and fields devoted to special objects are matters of detail; but, weaken that family life which it is the tendency of some of our philosophies to undervalue, and you are weakening the mainstay of our national existence. Apart from the idea of family, a nation is a rope of sand.

But are the Chinese at home quite such a model nation as Colonel Tchong would have us believe? Let us take the evidence of a Russian, Mr. Piassetsky, who has recently been travelling there, and who saw a good deal behind the scenes, for he was connected with an official "mission" which, quite contrary to Chinese usage, was allowed to run about everywhere, taking measurements, examining public buildings, etc. Everywhere he was struck with the poverty and unhealthiness of the people, and with the brutal way in which the police, told off to protect him while he was sketching, "struck right and left without mercy, quite needlessly, throwing themselves like angry tigers on their compatriots, who grumbled and got angry, but obeyed." He also notes the decayed state of everything, from the Great Wall to the sewers of Peking, which, once a complete system, are now pretty nearly useless for want of repair. He describes a cottage:

"Two nearly naked children lying on the floor ill, a third in the mother's arms; a deformed old grandmother, with a pipe between her teeth. A few bundles of rags, but not a chair or a bed." This is much as the Colonel might describe a lodging in "outcast Paris" or "outcast London"; nor does it seem quite like the Utopia which he describes, where universal mildness and benevolence are the rule, for the soldiers escorting the Russian "mission" to press helpers, when their boat was stuck in the rapids, by dragging bystanders by their pigtailed, and flogging them to make them lend a hand. Of course it is not fair to look at what happened during the horrible famine of eight years ago, when in Shansi alone seven-tenths of the people—nearly five millions—died. We had our own horrors during the Irish famine, and probably the contrast between the luxury in Dublin and the misery at Skibbereen was not greater than that between mandarins and poor in Northern China in 1877; but then we do not put in such a claim for universal benevolence as that which Colonel Tchong makes on behalf of his compatriots. It is a horrible story, this, of the last Chinese famine; cannibalism in its worst form; no food; the pangs of emptiness assuaged with "stone cakes," made of soft slate—like that of our pencils—powdered and mixed with ground millet husks. A three years' drought had accumulated a vast mass of misery; and, as the famine lasted on through the winter, houses were pulled down and the timber used for fuel, along with the dead trees, killed by the bark being stripped from them, till—except the poisonous kinds—there was not a living tree in the district. "The poor," says the Official Report, "suffered less than the rich. They soon felt the pinch, and sold to their richer neighbours houses, land, etc., at a loss, and then fled while they still had strength; the wealthy, thus enriched, stayed on, hoping rain would come, and in many cases starved to death in the midst of excellent furniture. Children became a drug in the market, and young women were offered for nothing, and even so it was impossible to get anyone to take them. Such women and children as survived seemed at the end of the famine to be in better state than the men." Of course, the Chinese Government did a good deal; but what does Colonel Tchong say to the chief difficulty having been "the corruption of native agents"? To judge

by what he tells us, Chinese agents should be as incapable of jobbery as Washington himself. As for private subscriptions, China was lamentably in the rear, foreigners in and out of China contributing nearly seventy thousand pounds.

But it is unfair to test the character of a people by the way in which they meet such fearful calamity as that. More to the purpose is it to look at the care usually taken of the poor. Here is the way things go on in San-t'sung, a creek in Canton, full of boats and crowded on both sides with beggarly tenements: "Every kind of filth from boats and houses is thrown into the water; yet this fluid, too dirty for washing, is daily used for cooking purposes, without being filtered or precipitated with alum, as is done at Shanghai." Such a state of things in the richest city of the empire does not show that marked care for one's neighbour which the Colonel boasts of as a special Chinese characteristic.*

The moral of it all is: We must not put too much faith in a Chinese military gentleman who extols his countrymen at the expense of other nations. In a very polite way, the Colonel is only raising the old cry of "foreign devils"—the euphemism for which is "gentlemen from over sea"—with about as much reason for so doing as a treaty-port mob has when it hustles a white man and calls him names. Reason! Alas, they have sometimes reason enough for doing that! Look at Arch-deacon Gray's story of the chairman whom he found crying on the quay at Canton. All day the poor fellow had been wheeling about a heavy British tar, mostly from "public" to "public," and now Jack, drunk and glorious, had knocked him down when he asked to be paid, and was just being rowed off in his ship's boat. Besides, think how America treats the Chinaman, whose patient industry alone made civilisation possible when California began to be colonised. Who washed the San Francisco shirts? Who hawked vegetables? Who supplied the lack of maid-servants when the city was young? And now these helpful citizens are ground

down with poll-tax, never exacted from the white; pure air ordinance, enacting that every living-room must contain so many cubic feet, but never enforced on the American; gambling acts, put in force solely against the countrymen of Ah-Sing; acts against wearing queues, against carrying pails slung on a beam over the shoulder, and many more little worrying enactments. Sometimes the American eagle is not satisfied with such petty work. He screams his battle-cry and there is a riot; the "hoodlums" and other votaries of cheap whisky fall on the unhappy Celestials, beat and slay them, and wreck their houses.

What shall we say then? There are faults and grievances on both sides. If the Chinese at home throw mud—and stones, if they dare—at European visitors, Californians and Australians are cruel and unfair to Chinese—certainly not doing as we, if we were to go and emigrate among Mongolians, would like to be done by. Colonel Tcheng estimates too highly the virtues of his countrymen; but we surely are often too blind to the good qualities of those who have grown up through long ages under conditions so wholly different from ours.

CHARITY VOTING.

AMONGST the many thousand benevolent people who subscribe in singleness of heart to the various noble charitable institutions with which our country abounds, few, probably, are aware what cost and labour are represented by the circulars which they from time to time receive, soliciting their votes on behalf of some particular object of more or less distressing urgency. Possibly the circular may say that this is the fourth or fifth year of endeavour to obtain the election of a son of some poor widow, to an institution established and supported for the purpose of supplying orphans with education and maintenance till they are old enough to make a start in life and fight their own way in the world. Or it may be on behalf of some poor creature stricken with an incurable disease, and rendered utterly unable to support him or herself; or suffering from some ailment, for the treatment of which special institutions exist; or the victim of hopeless idiocy, or any other of the many ills, mental or physical, to which flesh is heir. But all such appeals

* The state of the prisons is a fair test. Dr. Dudgeon says: "Prisoners, let the charge against them be grave or light, or even false, or at all events unproven, are all kept together, eating, sleeping, doing everything in one place. Language fails to describe the horrors of a Chinese prison. It is made specially disgusting to drive the prisoners to extremes. No one can carry in food or money without bribing the porters." Clearly the Chinese want a Howard. Will Colonel Tcheng, who must know all about Howard's work, volunteer for the task?

have a distressing uniformity in the necessities circumstances of the applicants.

Those who have any knowledge or experience of the blank despair which falls upon the widow suddenly bereft of the means of support, deprived of the light of her life, and left alone with her helpless family of young ones to face the world in the unknown future which lies before her, will be able to appreciate what a desirable prize this election to an orphanage is; what a load of care and anxiety would be lifted from her heart could she but obtain it! She feels sure that if her case were but known in the proper quarter the election of Master Tom, the bright, manly little fellow, would be certain to succeed. But how? What has to be done? What are the steps necessary to be taken to make her case known, in order to secure this desirable object?

She has heard something of them, and her heart sinks within her. Possibly her husband—like herself, well-educated and of refined habits—has been a professional man, or clerk occupying a responsible position, whose income has been absorbed in their modest household expenses, or at any rate, the little they have been able to save has been exhausted by the absolute requirements of his long and painful illness. Her only prospect now, is to turn whatever talents and accomplishments she possesses to future use for the support of herself and children, which will tax to the utmost all the resources she can command. Whatever else she has to do, however, she must find time, and money too, for this. The benefits to be derived are too valuable to be thrown away without an effort. For the future, therefore, till this object is obtained, all her exertions are subordinated to this one all-absorbing purpose.

What, then, is the ordeal through which she has to pass before her child can obtain the hoped-for benefit? If it be intended that the good to be received shall be appreciated in proportion to the labour and difficulty involved in obtaining it, no better means could be adopted for the purpose of enhancing its value; for, not unfrequently, the actual money expended, plus the labour and anxiety, bears a large proportion to the money value of the benefit ultimately received.

The first step is to obtain a list of the subscribers to the institution whose benefits it is sought to obtain; and a formidable list it looks, containing perhaps several thousand names. To each of these

subscribers a circular must be addressed—and this of itself is a heavy labour in addition to the cost of postage and printing—placing the particulars of the case in the strongest possible light, and soliciting votes on the child's behalf. Our typical widow is, of course, quite unknown to all but a handful, and perhaps to all, of this host.

Moreover, hers is but one of many such applications which every subscriber receives, each of which represents a case with special and distressing features, probably equally deserving of attention and relief. And when it is known that for ten vacancies there may be two hundred candidates, one stands appalled at the amount of labour, expense, anxiety and disappointment involved in the contest, and the question irresistibly forces itself upon us, whether it is really necessary and unavoidable that all this should be undergone by not only those who do ultimately derive the coveted benefit, but by all who in dire distress have unsuccessfully sought to obtain what so many thousand persons desire freely to bestow?

As a candidate is seldom known to be successful on the first attempt, the same course of expense and labour has of necessity to be repeated year after year, till either success is achieved or the resources of the applicant are exhausted.

In reference to this matter, one writes: "I have put down the amount spent—twenty-one pounds for one election—as nearly as possible; the loss of time spent over canvassing was very great, and to me was an actual loss in money, as I do a great deal of fancy-work for sale to help to support my children. I think I may say that, at the least, I could have made fifteen pounds more by my work had not my time been so taken up by writing and canvassing."

Another says: "I am certain each election costs nearly thirty pounds. I feel it a very hard case, because my boy is close to thirteen years of age, and if he misses this election—his last chance—I know not what I am to do."

A third says: "This is my third application, and now I am told there is no chance of my boy succeeding, unless several votes are bought, which it is impossible to do, as I have no influential friends."

A fourth writes: "In my case, the expense, time, and disappointment have been most disheartening. I am quite sure, had my case to be decided by the committee, who have a true statement of my present position, family, and income,

my boy would have been at once elected. I have had for three years, twelve thousand circulars. I spent many, many nights—the only time I could spare from my duties—directing and sending out the circulars, but I am sorry to say without much success.”

A fifth says: “I have worked at the papers till I have been giddy and nearly blind, and have had to leave many things undone I should otherwise have had time for.”

Can anything be more condemnatory of the voting system, under which such experiences are not only possible, but are absolute and known consequences, than these distressing but simple narratives in the words of the applicants themselves?

A most striking example of the labour to which candidates are subjected in striving after the benefits of voting charities in the case of institutions other than orphanages, is shown by a notice of election recently issued by the British Home for Incurables, Clapham Rise, of which Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales is patroness. It states that the polling will be at the Cannon Street Hotel, and will be opened at half-past twelve, closing at two o'clock precisely. A donation of five guineas gives one life vote; an annual subscription of one guinea gives two votes at each election, which takes place twice a year.

On the present occasion there are seven persons to be elected to the benefits of the institution, being two more than on the three last occasions, so that the proportion of vacancies to candidates is rather larger than usual, although these latter for this election are one hundred and seventeen, all of whom are eligible. With the notice of the election is a tabulated list of the candidates, giving the name and address of each, with the age, number of applications which already have been made, the number of votes each has polled, and the particulars of qualification of each case.

It is fearful to contemplate the number of occasions on which some have applied, and the amount of suffering which has been endured in the prolonged striving for a boon which in the case of many of them can never come. The candidate who heads the list in alphabetical order has applied eleven times, and polled three hundred and twenty-three votes. There is another who has applied twenty-four times, and polled eight hundred and forty-four votes; while one has actually applied twenty-five times and only obtained eighty-eight votes; and another, with the same number of applications, has obtained

two hundred and forty-three votes. Altogether six have applied twenty times and upwards, and seven have presented themselves between fifteen and twenty times. It is obvious that the bulk of the subscribers can have no knowledge of the individual cases, and it is clear to anyone who carefully reads over the distressing particulars of each case, that other considerations than those of actual need or deserts have determined the number of votes recorded. For instance, one obtains, on the eighth application; one thousand two hundred and fifty-eight votes; no doubt a most deserving case, but to an outsider presenting no special features over the one just following, who has applied fifteen times and obtained two hundred and seventy-eight votes. Or, as in the case of another who has obtained one thousand two hundred and three votes on the fourth application, as compared with one very similar, who, on the eighth application, obtains only seventy-eight votes.

Now, this is no hypothetical case, and is it not fair to take into consideration the proportion the amount of money spent, not only by the one hundred and ten unsuccessful candidates, but by the whole one hundred and seventeen, bears to the money value of the benefit received by the seven successful cases?

Surely there is sufficient here to convince the most sceptical of the unnecessary infliction of an enormous amount of mental suffering and anxiety, and of the grievous wrong which is inflicted on large bodies of applicants who are induced to exhaust their scanty resources in canvassing, a large proportion of whom can never receive any benefit, but wear themselves out in body, purse, and spirit, lured on by the vain hope of a prize in this lottery of charity.

It is painfully beyond dispute, with such discrepancies before one's eyes, that the actual circumstances of the poor candidates are not even thought of, but that success depends, in most cases, upon the possession of money or friends to the exclusion of those who have neither. And, in fact, as the Marquis of Salisbury pithily puts it, “It”—the system of charity voting—“selects the objects of charity in the very worst way, befriending those who have many friends, and sending back those who have few friends, unrelieved.”

It is obvious that the terrible expense, added to the all-absorbing anxiety and exhausting labour, must tell with crushing effect against the candidature of those least

able to bear it—that is, against the most deserving of those for whose benefit charitable institutions are supported. It has, in fact, come to be recognised that, without either money or friends, the most deserving applicants have next to no chance of success, whereas, by a lavish expenditure in canvassing and the purchase of votes, together with the help of certain personal influences, and a skilful management in the exchange of votes, it is quite possible for a wholly undeserving candidate to be successful. This was plainly shown in a case which was tried before Mr. Justice Blackburn and Mr. Justice Quain, arising out of the failure of one of the parties in the transaction to complete a bargain made for the exchange of votes, and it is a painful fact which cannot be too widely known.

As a climax to the labour and anxiety of the canvass comes the public polling-day. On these occasions the scenes exhibited are a positive scandal. It is then when is displayed the skill, amidst all the turmoil and excitement of a popular election, of the pushing, scheming, bustling manipulator who carries on a regular buying and selling of votes. Placards are exhibited setting forth in more or less harrowing terms the case of Thomas Smith, an orphan, of Sarah Grundy, a cripple, or Mary Perkins, an incurable, and soliciting votes on their behalf. Bargains according to the chances of the various candidates are made by their respective partisans for one election against another, or one charity against another. There, amidst an excited crowd, may be seen ladies and gentlemen, subscribers, committeemen, and officers of the institution, candidates and their friends and relatives, eager and clamorous for votes, and at each fresh arrival these poor women crowd around them, holding out their cards with appeals to "spare me one vote," or "help my orphan child."

In hard and painful contrast to these is the quiet entry of a man who in his own person fully illustrates the power of the purse in determining the election. He is neither excited nor hurried. His confidential friends, who are conducting the case in which he is interested, know how many votes have been sent in for his candidate to the office of the institution that morning, for the number was posted up. They knew by that time—say half-past one p.m., the poll closing at two—how matters stood, and former experience would tell them the average number of votes which carry an election. The great man

can sign with equal ease a cheque for twenty pounds, forty pounds, or a hundred pounds, and a clerk of the institution is at hand to give a receipt for the same, and the forty, eighty, or one hundred votes available on the spot are secured.

Another phase equally objectionable may be seen in those who are clearly professional dealers, accosting the women thus: "How many votes have you? Yours is a first trial; you cannot have many." "No; I have only forty-two." "Well, it is plain you have no chance whatever this time. Give me your forty-two votes, and I will give you an I O U for the same number for next election. Your friends, who have given you their votes now, will doubtless do the same again. My votes will be from my friends, which you will have no chance of getting, except through me."

The closing scene may be imagined, and if there are thirty or forty winners rendered happy and exulting in their success, while forgetting the means through which that success has been attained, what about the hundreds of unsuccessful candidates left to brood over wasted energy, misspent time, and ill-spended money thrown away? And who are they over whom this triumph has been achieved? They are desolate orphans, the halt, the maimed, the blind, the paralysed, the idiotic, who have been pitted in competition with others similarly suffering. And it is through such an ordeal as this, with their names and distresses paraded and flaunted before the public, that those for whose benefit our great "self-supporting" charities, of which we are so proud, exist, have to pass, in addition to the preliminary labour and expense of the canvass, in order to obtain that which should not cost the recipient a farthing.

From the above statements, some idea may be formed of the varied influences which go to decide an election, quite independent of the merits or deserts of any particular candidate; but few, except those who are thoroughly mixed up with such matters, can really comprehend to what a system it has been reduced in the hands of those who make a business of managing such elections.

The I O U system of borrowing is carried on to an enormous extent, and the complication of the system of purchase and exchange is beyond all conception to the uninitiated. But it is plain that, under such circumstances, the weakest, the poorest, and most friendless must inevitably go to the wall.

As to the reality of bartering, what do

our readers think of the following, taken from the exchange column of a ladies' newspaper?

"Six votes for the Licensed Victuallers' Asylum to be given for a lop-eared rabbit, a sealakin jacket, or a black lace flounce."

"Two votes for the Governesses' Asylum required, for which a Persian kitten, or an old oak chest, or some crests and monograms, are offered."

This is sober reality, the transactions are bonâ-fide, and show that the system is so far recognised as not to be confined to private arrangements, or even to the public polling-days.

Seeing how very small is the number of successful candidates in proportion to the whole number who have been engaged in the labour and expense of canvassing, the reflection naturally arises, who has been benefited by all the money which has been spent by the unsuccessful ones? The only answer that can be given is, absolutely no one but the post-office and the printers. As a matter of right, however, money thus spent ought to be debited in the balance-sheets to the cost of management of the various institutions which have permitted and encouraged the expenditure; for the fact is, the annual amount spent by or on behalf of the vast number of candidates continually engaged in canvassing bears a very large proportion to the sums granted in the various forms of relief.

This expenditure, however, is lost sight of, or is altogether unknown to the general public, since it never appears on the accounts of any of the charities. It is, nevertheless, a most important item in the cost at which those charities are administered.

But the waste of money obtained by painful efforts thus fruitlessly spent, and the terrible effects on health and strength, are not the only evils attendant upon charity voting, for the habit of writing begging-letters which it encourages is demoralising in the extreme, and nothing is more calculated to break down every barrier of self-respect and modesty than thus teaching them to parade and trade upon their afflictions.

Mr. Gladstone says: "The system is a nuisance, and, in my opinion, it is an unmitigated nuisance. These votes are a source of annoyance, and must be detrimental to the cause of charity, and to those who allege 'necessity' I can answer the system is a nuisance."

It is defended on the grounds that, were the subscribers deprived of the privilege of voting, subscriptions would fall off, and charities suffer, and also that the interest excited by the canvassing advertises the institutions, and increases their resources. In answer to the latter reason, it may be asked, is it justifiable, under any circumstances, to advertise an institution at the cost of the suffering class for the relief of which it was established? With regard to the loss of subscriptions, this would appear, from the testimony of those institutions which have adopted a different mode of selection, to be altogether a groundless fear; and if, to a small extent, this proved to be true, taking into consideration the large amount annually wasted by the unsuccessful candidates, which would be saved, the actual amount of good done by the institutions would be not less, but more. But, on the other hand, many benevolent people, conscious of the evils of the present system, now withhold their subscriptions from voting charities.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, when preaching on behalf of the "Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy," took credit to that institution that there was "no canvassing, none of that 'working up of a case,' as it is called. Would," he asked, "subscribers fail if they were not indulged with this electioneering in the dark? Let them look at this 'Corporation of the Sons of the Clergy.' All confide in a committee of honourable persons whom the applicants themselves would respect, and to whom they would gladly make known their griefs."

Conscious of the great and serious evils which have grown up round the present system, some of our older institutions have been induced to adopt a healthier mode of appointment to their vacancies, and others which have more recently come into existence have gladly, and, as they say, profitably, adopted a system free from the abuses referred to. Much, however, still remains to be done, and candidates are still to too great an extent exposed to all the chances of the worst of lotteries.

The principal points objected to are—the absence of comparative selection; great disproportion of candidates to vacancies; trafficking in votes; and public polling-days. Various suggestions have been made with the object of eliminating these evils, but it matters little what system is adopted so long as the main purpose is obtained. Only let subscribers and the public thoroughly comprehend what the present system really

is, and its fate is sealed, a remedy will be found.

There should be neither cost nor labour involved in making an application to these societies, and a decision should be given with as little delay as possible. But in any case the public polling-day—that great and crying abuse—should be forthwith abolished; next, canvassing by applicants or their friends in any shape or form should be forbidden. Take, for instance, as an example of a different method, that adopted by the ‘Cripples’ Home, Kensington. A committee of selection investigates the different cases with care and pains. Those which on enquiry approve themselves as deserving are entered on the list and admission is afterwards strictly by rotation. No canvassing is permitted. Begging-letters are practically prohibited, because they could avail nothing. The friends are told as nearly as possible when the child will probably be admitted, and there is no room for restlessness or disappointment, and the labour and expense incurred under the other system are saved.

Or, in the case of those institutions where it is not possible altogether to substitute any other system for voting, a committee of selection might be appointed, as in the case of the Royal Medical Benevolent College, for the purpose of investigating the claims of those applicants who have already been admitted by the council as candidates, and from these to recommend to the subscribers for election a list equal in number to the vacancies to be filled up. The votes to be sent to the committee.

If some such mode as either of the above were adopted, great suffering, mental and physical, would be prevented, as well as bitter and prolonged disappointment from the indulgence of groundless hopes, and subscribers would have the satisfaction of feeling that the purpose for which charitable institutions existed had really been attained without cost and without suffering to the objects of the charity.

For the purpose of influencing public opinion towards the achievement of this great end, a society called the “Charity Voting Reform Association,” under the presidency of His Grace the Duke of Northumberland, has been some time in existence. It hopes to obtain the desired end by acting in friendly accord with the subscribers and managers of the institutions themselves, and by diffusing information on this important subject. It issues a “White List” containing the names of more

than forty institutions which are free from the evils of the canvassing system, and has received the almost universal support of the press. Its principles have been cordially advocated by the Earl of Shaftesbury, the Marquis of Salisbury, Mr. Gladstone, Sir Charles Trevelyan, Miss Nightingale, Mr. Spurgeon, Lord Derby, and many other eminent public personages. Those, therefore, who are desirous of seeing the institutions in which they are interested freed from the abuses with which in too many instances they are encumbered, should put themselves in communication with the honorary secretary at 30, Charing Cross, S.W.

MANX SMUGGLING.

As late as the commencement of the present century the most remunerative career open to a Manxman was undoubtedly smuggling. It was better than the Bar, far better than the Church, both of which demanded an expensive education, and offered but a meagre reward; while, beyond these, there was nothing else, except fishing and farming, and they could often be combined with it. When it became dangerous, it fell into disrepute; when it became unprofitable, it was abandoned entirely. It is difficult in these days to realise the gigantic scale upon which it was once carried on, but the following fact speaks for itself. During the reign of George the Third, Commissioners were appointed to enquire into the matter, and they estimated the annual loss to the British Crown at three hundred and fifty thousand pounds. This certainly is a huge figure. But even on the supposition that it was merely a rough guess, it is likely to be rather under than over the mark, for negotiations for the sale of the island were then in progress between the Crown and the Duke of Athole. Against it must be set off a sum of ten thousand pounds a year, the value of Manx smugglers and their cargoes seized off the Irish coast. Indeed, there seems to have been a pretty general idea, not altogether unwarranted by facts, that Manxmen spent part of their time in hunting the herring, and the rest in being hunted by revenue-cutters.

The geographical position of the island was one of the chief reasons for this singular state of affairs. Being centrally situated with reference to “the adjacent islands of Great Britain and Ireland,” it was an excellent dépôt for contraband

goods, which could thence be run across to their ultimate destination at a convenient season. In fact, it was a sort of bonded warehouse; the insular duties being so small, that they may be regarded as payment for storage. British spirits, for example, paid merely a shilling a gallon; tea, sixpence a pound; coffee, fourpence; tobacco, threepence; and salt, which was smuggled in enormous quantities, nothing at all. Still, absurdly low as these duties were, compared with those of the present day, they were often evaded; and in this there was no great difficulty, owing to the nature of the coast being as favourable to the smugglers as it was unfavourable to those ignorant of its peculiarities.

Range after range of high black headlands rising sheer out of the sea to confront the powerful currents that chafe around their base incessantly; innumerable caves peeping with innocent, half-closed eyes from behind the swirling eddies and bristling crags, yet expanding marvellously on closer acquaintance; long, dark reefs, here thrusting a row of jagged edges above the water, and there lurking below the surface with a grim, patient look, significant of triumph eventually; wild glens turning and twisting among the hills, and at length losing themselves in trackless stretches of moorland where gorse, and heather, and boulder are mingled together in picturesque confusion, and where a carpet of velvety turf often conceals a dangerous chasm beneath—these are but a few of the natural advantages that the island offered to smuggling. What little was wanting, art soon stepped in to supply. Isolated farmhouses, barns, inns, and even cottages, served as capital store-houses, not likely to be tampered with by the insular excise officers, whose business was with the coast, and many of these buildings were provided with cellars stretching far away underground. Their use has gone, but some still remain. You may occasionally come across them in out-of-the-way spots; the road returns a hollow ring to a stamp of the foot, and the sound calls up many a romantic episode of an almost forgotten past. In conveying the goods across country, an old smuggler once told me, the cart-wheels and horses' feet were invariably muffled with crape, and the men were silent until the town had been left behind. It must have been a weird spectacle, this procession of phantom carts, with their shadowy riders, gliding noiselessly along the dark, deserted street, while

the moon was in hiding, or not yet risen. What a crop of ghost stories could have sprung from a single night's sowing! Once in the open country the merry smugglers could laugh and sing to their hearts' desire. There was no one to interfere with them; most were in league with them. Rural policemen did not exist in the island; smuggling apart, they were unnecessary.

In consequence of the report laid before Parliament by the Commissioners, certain restrictions were imposed upon the insular traffic, the Lord of Man perforce consenting. The importation of British spirits was limited to forty thousand gallons; tea, twenty thousand pounds; coffee, five thousand pounds; and tobacco, forty thousand pounds. The exportation of these articles, and also of salt, was altogether prohibited. More absurd regulations could hardly be imagined. A vessel loaded with a mixed cargo could bring what she liked to the island, and as for getting the goods away again, she had merely to wait for a dark night. The insular revenue-officers were few and far between, and by the Hovering Acts the English authorities could not touch her within nine miles of the shore. In order to secure a coign of vantage, the latter had agents in the island, some of them trustworthy enough, no doubt, but others in the pay of the smugglers; so that when anything important was about to take place, the Government cutter was easily dispatched on a wild-goose chase down channel.

Allusion has just been made to the Hovering Acts, which placed the limit of the Lord of Man's jurisdiction at three leagues from the shore, the imaginary line being called "the piles." Of the working of these laws Waldron, who was one of the above-mentioned agents to the British Crown, gives an amusing illustration. In describing the town of Douglas early in the eighteenth century, he says: "It is full of very rich and eminent dealers. The reason of which is plain; the harbour of it being the most frequented of any in the Island, Dutch, Irish, and East India vessels, there is the utmost opportunity for carrying on the smuggling trade. So much, it must be confess'd, do some men prefer their gain to their safety, that they will venture it anywhere, but in this place there is little danger in infringing on the rights of the Crown. And here I must inform my reader that tho' his most excellent Majesty of Great Britain is master of the seas, yet the Lord of Man has the

jurisdiction of so much round the Island, that a master of a ship has no more to do than to watch his opportunity of coming within the piles, and he is secure from any danger from the king's officers. I myself had once notice of a stately pirate that was steering her course into this harbour, and would have boarded her before she got within the piles, but for want of being able to get sufficient help, could not execute my design. Her cargo was indigo, mastic, raisins of the sun, and other very rich goods, which I had the mortification to see sold to the traders of Douglas without the least duty paid to his Majesty. The same ship was taken afterwards near the coast, by the information I sent of it to the Commissioners of the Customs."

The fact that Waldron was unable "to get sufficient help" on this occasion, and probably on many others, is readily explained. Nearly everybody in the island was engaged in smuggling, some providing the capital, the others doing the work, which was just sufficiently spiced with adventure to make it fascinating, and the few who had no share in the contraband trade, like Nellie Cook, "looked askew." A highly immoral state of society, it may be said. But, according to Chief Justice Blundell, the Isle of Man was "no parcel of the realm of England," so Manxmen were only doing what many statesmen of the present day would not shrink from—dishing a foreign Government. Nor had they any great cause for friendly feelings towards their neighbours. From time immemorial the island had been ravaged by Danes, and Celts, and Norsemen, swarming around the coasts as regularly as the herrings; then came the hated Redshanks, as the Scotch were called; and lastly a crowd of skirmishers fleeing from justice in England, and swindling the simple natives to such an extent that the national character gradually underwent a complete change. It was only natural that they should cherish a wish for revenge, and if that revenge was profitable, so much the better. Robbed for generation after generation, they had grown shrewd, cautious, and suspicious; but living among such wild scenery, with the restless sea ever fretting around their rock-girt coast, it was impossible for them to lose entirely their hardy courage and love of adventure. And for these smuggling offered a splendid outlet, of which they availed themselves eagerly.

It must be admitted, however, that the

foregoing reasons—geographical and topographical advantages, high remuneration with little risk, and an adventurous spirit coupled with a wish for revenge—are in themselves insufficient to explain the remarkable phenomenon of a whole nation's abandoning its ordinary pursuits to engage in contraband traffic. What, then, was the other reason? Bearing directly upon a question that is now agitating the British public, the answer is not without importance. It is this—the unsatisfactory condition of the Manx land laws. A brief glance will put the matter beyond dispute.

In 1076, Goddard Crovan, son of Olave the Black of Iceland, conquered the island and divided the southern part between such of his forces as chose to remain with him. This done, he granted "the Northern division to the original inhabitants, but upon condition that no man for ever should claim any inheritance." The whole island, therefore, became the demesne of the Crown. But Sacheverell, writing in 1698, adds: "It is more than probable that Goddard Crovan (notwithstanding his covenant upon his conquest) had given them some sort of fixed tenure, but upon the reduction of the island by Alexander, King of Scotland, it is likely it fell upon the Scotch bottom, where the grand charter only is fixed, the rest loose and uncertain, by which means the country was laid waste, the soil impoverished, while it was nobody's interest to improve it." In 1417, Sir John Stanley, King and Lord of Man, altered all this. "Considering that nothing tends more to the improvement of a country than a just and secure tenure," he appointed "commissioners with instructions to settle the people." This they did by enacting that tenants should have "their names entered in the court rolls after the manner of English copyhold, and the occupancy given them by the delivery of a straw," and also that the lands should in future descend to the next of kin. This was a step in the right direction. "By degrees they came to be reputed customary tenants, and paid only a small gratuity;" buildings grew up in all directions, the lands were better tilled, the people comfortable—a new era had commenced. It was brought to an end by James, Seventh Earl of Derby, who had the hardihood to declare that the covenant of Goddard Crovan, made six centuries before, still held good. In fact, he claimed proprietary rights over the whole island. Here was a case for the Statute of Limi-

tations, if ever there was one. In their emergency the foolish Manxmen agreed to a compromise, instead of appealing unto Cæsar as they undoubtedly should have done; they gave up their lands on condition that they should receive them back for three lives, so that their great-grandchildren and subsequent descendants became mere tenants-at-will. Through the unwearying exertions of Bishop Wilson, this monstrous compact was eventually annulled. But in the meantime building ceased, repairs were unheard of, the ground was exhausted as rapidly as possible, and then followed a period of untilled farms, ruined houses, and general desolation. The land was deserted for the sea—Manxmen rushed in a body into smuggling.

Of course, they were unable to supply all the capital requisite for carrying on the contraband trade on a scale so extensive that the mere evasion of duty cost the English Government three hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year. The value of these goods must have been several millions at least, quite beyond the purchasing power of the insular purse, and bills of exchange or credit must be reckoned as out of the question. The matter was arranged in a much simpler way; many of the large business firms abroad had duly accredited agents in the island. Thurot, for example, was some time stationed there in the service of a Welsh smuggler. The occupation just suited his daring nature, and it was while thus engaged that he acquired the intimate knowledge of the British shores that proved so serviceable to him afterwards. By a curious coincidence, the naval action between his fleet and Captain Elliot's, in which he met defeat and death at one and the same time, occurred off the west coast of the Isle of Man.

At last the English Government awoke to the fact that smuggling could be suppressed only by the purchase of the island. For a long time the Duke—or rather several Dukes—of Athole held out against any arrangement, but eventually he was obliged to give way. In 1765, the Act of Revestment was passed, by which he surrendered some of his rights in return for seventy thousand pounds; and, after many years of haggling, he received in 1829 four hundred and sixteen thousand pounds for the remainder. It was in every way an excellent bargain for the Crown. Judged by the statement of the Commissioners, the gain in duties alone must have covered the whole amount in less than two years,

while the surplus revenue of the island from 1829 until the present time may be estimated at about a million sterling. What, it may be asked, have the English Government done in return for this handsome income? Nothing; absolutely nothing, except to pocket the money. And they are not likely to do anything more, unless Manxmen get up a revolution, or something of the sort.

The sale of the island was naturally most odious to the inhabitants, for they were deprived of their occupation without any chance of compensation. They expressed their opinions in a variety of ways. Here is one of them, written about the end of the last century:

The babes unborn will rue the day
That the Isle of Man was sold away,
For there's ne'er an old wife that loves a dram
But what will lament for the Isle of Man.

GERALD.

BY ELEANOR C. PRICE.

CHAPTER XXII. THE MADONNA DEL SASSO.

LATE in the afternoon of the next day, Gerald Fane was walking away from the Grand Hotel up the hill behind the town. He had arrived by the boat not an hour before, and the first person he met on landing was Mr. Warren, who was himself going on board, and who looked sulky and savage to the last degree.

There was no time for any talk with Warren, but he met Gerald with something between a rude laugh and a snarl.

"Here you are," he said, "coming to look after your sister—and somebody else too, I suspect. Well, I wish her joy, and you too."

"What do you mean, Mr. Warren?" said Gerald angrily.

"Ah, you are a fine fellow," said Warren. "Everything your own way now. Your brother is up there at the hotel, looking out for you. He will tell you what nice little arrangements we have made—all for your comfort."

"Look here, Mr. Warren," said Gerald, "I shall have nothing more to do with you."

"No, that you certainly won't," said Warren, and he left him, and pushed his way on board.

At the hotel Gerald went to his brother's room, and found him packing his things in a great hurry. Clarence was at first inclined to jeer, like Warren, but Gerald's real hearty anger and disgust presently made him serious. He told him that he was going off to England at once; that Warren was furious with him, as well as with

Gerald; but that he meant to make up the quarrel if he could. As for Gerald, he must look for no more help from either of them; he must find work for himself now, for Warren could not bear to hear his name. As for Ada, she had made her choice, and she must abide by it; from this day she belonged to Gerald, and they must struggle on as they could together. Clarence used a great many hard words in telling Gerald what he thought of him, Gerald defended himself indignantly, and the brothers parted at last in great anger. Clarence hurried away to his train, and Gerald, finding that Ada was not in the house, went out for a walk to cool himself and think things over.

His position was not at all a pleasant one. Here he was at five-and-twenty, thrown out of the work which had given him enough to live on during the last few years. Of course he had saved nothing; and out of that poor pay he had lost money every year, more or less, in bets and speculations under Clarence's encouragement. Yet it seemed to him that he had been leading a stern, hard life, denying himself all the amusements that a young fellow of his age might expect. What was the use? He was as poor now as when he left the army, after those two years in which horses, and generosity, and extravagance of every kind had run away with all his money. And now there was Ada to be provided for, as well as himself. He had considered that question in the autumn, when Clarence had proposed his odious plan. Then a respite of a few months had been given him. Now the question lay before him again, and must be answered.

And there was another complication; or rather there was the new atmosphere, in which he had consciously lived for a few months now. He was very deeply in love with Theo Meynell; and since their journey together, since that parting at Basle with the noise of the Rhine in their ears, when he had dared to show her what he felt, this love would not listen to reason any more. Of course it was madness for him to think of marrying at all; it was the very madness of ambition for him, in his hopeless poverty and want of everything, to dream of asking a woman like Theo to marry him. How could he do it? It was impossible; and yet it might be equally impossible not to do it, for the Fanes were by no means a patient race. Lady Redcliff could have told him that her Charles Fane had not scrupled to make

violent love to her, a dark, sparkling fairy of a girl, when he was almost as poor as Gerald was now. But she had a father to take care of her, and to treat the affair as the absurdity it was; so Charles Fane went off to die in Africa, and his love, a few years later, made no objection to being married to Lord Redcliff.

This old story was of course nothing to Gerald. As he turned from the road into a steep, stony lane that led up into the hills, and gave a few small coins to a blind beggar who was sitting under a picture of Our Lady on the wall, he was trying, without any success, to be sorry for that sudden foolishness at Basle. He did not think she was angry with him; he had a suspicion, which made the thought of her both more sad and more sweet, that as she was certainly his first love, so he perhaps was hers; that no one had ever before brought the light into her eyes that he had seen there when sometimes, after a moment, she used to look away from him. But all that did not alter the fact that the thing was hopeless, impossible; he had been very wrong and very foolish that evening at Basle. Yet he could not be sorry that he had kissed her hands once, if he was never to be so near her again.

He climbed slowly up the steep, pebbly road, these thoughts bringing after them the reflection that he had better end his troubles by throwing himself into the lake. In the white walls of the lane a door stood open here and there into green gardens, with trellises and flowering bushes; then came a sheltering arbour of vines just coming into fresh green leaf. Farther on, the path, shaded by trees, runs along the upper edge of a ravine full of tumbled stones, the bed of a mountain stream, which at this time of year trickles along very gently, making a pool here and there, where the washerwomen are busy, with coloured handkerchiefs tied over their heads. Higher up, the ravine is full of bright, budding trees; the path, on its way to an old convent perched among the rocks, passes under a deep archway with a Latin inscription, and then goes on in shade, the ravine low down on the right, and on the left a rocky wall rising high, covered with bushes, and moss, and ferns. Here and there, in this way to the sanctuary, are broad flights of steps to make the ascent easier; here and there is a grated chapel, with groups of life-size figures in painted terra-cotta—scenes from the Gospels, the Nativity, the Last Supper, very

grotesque and yet solemn in the half darkness of the caverns where they were arranged so long ago. Looking back from the path, through a frame of delicate green and brown branches, the lake lies calm, and blue, and brilliant in the afternoon sunshine, and up beyond, their white faintly streaked with grey, the mountains stand against the deep, quiet sky.

Gerald walked up through all this, and presently more steps brought him to the old yellow buildings of the convent. A low, dark arch bore the inscription, "Strada ai Monti"; but he thought he would see the end of this ascent first, so he went on up more flights of steps, with strange sacred emblems and pictures here and there, till he came into the square paved loggia of the convent, with the monks' house on one side, looking ruinous and old, and high arches forming a sort of cloister before the church door. It was all open to the sun and air, brown and yellow with years of sun. Little lizards, the only living things Gerald had seen since the washerwomen, ran in and out among the old crumbling stones. To the right, over a low wall, one could look straight down the rock into the valley, over the red roofs of Locarno to the lake, with purple shadows crossing it. A very steep path, with white glaring stations, led up from the town to the convent on this side. The way by which Gerald had come was too pleasant and easily winding for the pilgrims who really came to pay their devotion at the shrine of Our Lady of the Rock.

There was a strange charm about the convent, high, and lonely, and still, with such calm spring beauty in earth and air all round it. It seemed to be deserted by everything except the lizards; but presently a nightingale began to sing, and Gerald looked over the wall and saw that there was a garden down below, with arches of budding vines, and two old brown monks working in it silently. Just under the wall the garden was full of pink stocks. As Gerald stood there, leaning his elbows on the sun-baked stones, tired and anxious, with a half-envying thought of the contrast between those monks and himself, he became aware that there was somebody in the narrow open gallery which ran along by the south wall of the church, a sort of passage from the court where he was standing. Somebody was there, leaning on the wall like himself, looking at the stocks and listening to the nightingale. Her head was turned away

from him, but they became conscious almost at the same moment of each other's presence. Directly afterwards she had looked round, and he had joined her in the little gallery.

Theo's struggles with herself had not been much less than his, and the consequence of them was that she received him very quietly—coldly, Gerald thought. He feared now that he had offended her hopelessly at Basle, and became very miserable.

"I brought my sketch-book," Theo said, after the first rather constrained greeting. "But all this is too lovely to be sketched."

"It is a nice old place," said Gerald, looking vaguely round at the walls. Then he was silent for a minute; she did not speak; it was the strangest meeting. "I think Ada is out walking somewhere," he said presently. "Thank you so much for the telegram."

"You got it?" said Theo absently. "Ada? Oh yes, she is gone with my maid, a little farther up the hill. I liked this so much, I said I would wait for them here. You have not seen Ada yet, then?"

"No," said Gerald. After another pause he added: "I saw those two fellows; they are both off, one to Italy and the other to England. So, thanks to you and Lady Redcliff, there is an end of that trouble."

"Ah yes, that is very nice. I'm so glad," said Theo.

In all Gerald's acquaintance with her he had never seen her so absent, so dreamy, so evidently unconscious of what she was saying. She would not look at him; she had not looked at him yet; she kept her head a little turned away; her eyes were following one or two boats with white awnings, slowly crossing the blue of the lake. Gerald, looking at her, began to feel desperate. If she meant to show him that he must always remain where he was now, that his conduct at Basle could not be forgiven, and must never be alluded to again—why, she little knew what sort of feeling she had to deal with, if she thought it could be checked in such a way as this. She ought to have been cold all along, if she meant to be cold now. Was she quite heartless? So thought this wildly unreasonable young man.

"You like this, don't you?" he said presently, in a low voice. "Couldn't you stand here for ever?"

"Yes, I think I could," Theo answered. "It is so peaceful; so unlike all that life down below."

"It would drive me mad very soon," said Gerald. She took no notice of this

discordant speech, and he went on, after another of those painful, thrilling silences: "I suppose Ada will be ready to start to-morrow morning. I have nothing to go back to, but I can't stay here, and I must look out for some kind of work. I've got a notion of going to Africa, to the Diamond Fields; and trying my luck there—only I don't know what to do with her—— But I am boring you."

"Oh no; tell me," said Theo.

"I'm turned off," said Gerald, trying to speak lightly, "and I've got no money and no interest, and getting work is a serious thing nowadays."

"Did not you expect that something of this kind would happen?" said Theo, still with her faraway gaze.

"Of course I did; and it is not that which makes me miserable. I have expected it ever since last autumn; and now, may I confess something to you before I go away, and never see you again?"

She consented by a little movement of her head, but no words came.

"You won't understand it, because you don't know what temptation is," said Gerald. "I've reminded you before of that evening when you were riding with Mr. Goodall, and I met you at the gate. I had had a talk with my brother that day, and I felt I must get some money somehow and take Ada away. There were some valuable bonds in the iron safe at the office, belonging to the Company——"

He moved a little away from her, and stood leaning on the wall, hiding his face in his hands, wondering, the moment after he had spoken, what fiend of self-destruction had made him speak. Of course it was all over now; and as there was no happiness to be had anyhow, he might as well have left her with a fairly good opinion of him.

Theo turned towards him, looked at him, and the shadow of a smile came into her face, and her eyes shone as she said in a low voice:

"But you did not——"

"You stopped me," he said.

Though he did not look up, the sweetness of her voice encouraged him to go on. She was thoughtful and sad, but there was a strange happiness in her face; she stood and looked down at him as he talked. The lizards darted about on the warm wall, undisturbed by these quiet presences.

"I must go away and never see you again," Gerald repeated. "I dare not see

you again; it's beyond bearing. I'm afraid you are angry with me for losing my senses at Basle—but it is very hard. You can't have any notion what it is. I'm not going to ask you to say a word to me, now or ever, but there can't be much harm in telling you what you know already."

He stood upright, with a quick look into her face. She was very pale, with drooping eyelids, and he thought she looked colder than ever.

"You don't care for me," he said, "and I suppose you never could, even if I were rich, and dared ask you. But I'm glad you know that I love you a thousand times better than life, and always shall. Now let me kiss your hand again," he added more quietly, "and I will never trouble you any more. I have been wrong, perhaps, but you must remember that I am most awfully unhappy."

Something in her calmness had a calming effect on him. It seemed as if the cold shadow of the inevitable, to which they must resign themselves, had fallen over them both. He kissed her hand gently and walked away. For a moment Theo gazed again across the lake, then she looked after him; he was just passing into the sunlit court outside. Suddenly, flushing crimson, she made a few quick steps towards the archway, with both hands stretched out.

"Come back!" she said, just above her breath, but so low that it seemed hardly possible he could hear it.

He did hear it, however, and he turned round, and was by her side again in a moment.

"Don't you know?" Theo whispered to him, and it was perhaps still more wonderful that he heard that.

The archway threw a friendly little shadow, and the nightingale sang louder than ever in the garden, and the old monks moved slowly about among their vines without a suspicion of the strange thing which had happened in their own loggia above.

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